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POEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

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POEMS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN YEAR

BY

ARTHUR WENTWORTH
EATON

NEW YORK
THOMAS WHITTAKER
M C M V

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APR 21 1906
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Published November, 1905

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TO
MARY LAWRENCE HAUGHTON

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CONTENTS

ADVENT PAGE

When Saints of Old 15

CHRISTMAS

There Came A King 21

Eder's Watch Tower 23

The Angels' Song 25

O Happy Christmas Days of Old ... 27

I Know a Vast Cathedral 29

They Tell Us Only Rustic Shepherds Heard 31

Christmas Prophecy 32

EPIPHANY

Wise Men From the Orient Came 35

SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, QUINQUAGESIMA

Preparation 39

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CONTENTS

LENT PAGE

The Lenten-tide 43
Lenten Hope 45
The Inner Court 47

EASTER

White Festival of Easter 51
O Easter Queen 54
Easter Flowers 56
All the Sullen Sorrow of the Nations 58
Easter-tide 60
At Last With Soft Magnolia Blooms 62

ASCENSION

The Conquering Life 67

WHITSUN-TIDE

O Spirit From the Eternal Deep 71

TRINITY

God's Manifoldness 77
My Purest Longings Spring 81
O Love Divine 83

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CONTENTS

TRINITY (Continued) PAGE

Sinai and the Plain 85
Resignation 88
Immortality 89
He Understands 90
Thy Priest 92
Pray For The Dead 94
Sometime 96

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ADVENT

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WHEN SAINTS OF OLD

WHEN saints of old sad vigil kept
Beside the brooks of Babylon,
And swathed in sackcloth, silent wept
Because the light of Heaven was gone,
Some prophet old, in desert dress,
Would raise his rugged voice and cry:
"Why sit ye here in such distress?
Ye ask deliverance, it is nigh,
Ye crave a monarch who shall show
Compassion for the suffering poor,
That sceptred king ye soon shall know,
His chariot wheels are at the door.

One starlit night a little child,
The King so long expected, came,
To still the sea of passion wild,
The sins that darken life to shame,

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Deep in the conscience of the race
To light red judgment fires, whose gleam
Should penetrate the darkest place
Of human thought, or deed, or dream.
His throne was laid in law and love,
The crown he wore was righteousness,
Of the symbolic sacred dove
His signet had the sole impress.

Thus came he once, but every age
Beholds that sovereign come again,
The war with wrong afresh to wage,
The love to seek of sorrowing men,
And while we sit in vigil sad
Beside our brooks of Babylon,
And mourn because the world is mad,
And Truth's majestic empire done,
God's prophets, as in ages old
In Judah and in Galilee,
Proclaim that lust and love of gold
Shall not enthroned forever be,

But humbled to their rightful place
Of thralls and subject powers, shall stand
Subdued and meek before his face
Who sits at last in sole command;

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WHEN SAINTS OF OLD

That all the lies men love shall flee
Like ghosts that dread the approaching sun,
Whene'er the king in majesty
Declares the reign of error done;

That redder judgment fires shall glow,
And yet sweet love increase in power,
Till Time's mixed trumpets cease to blow
And earth has reached its final hour.

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CHRISTMAS

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THERE CAME A KING

THERE came a king to Bethlehem town,
Two thousand years gone by,
Who had no ermine robe or crown
To mark His royalty,

Who found no throng to pave His road
With palms, or carpets gay,
Nor palace rich for His abode,
Nor courtiers to obey;

Yet empire vast awaited Him
On mountain, moor, and main;
Even Europe's tangled forests dim
Held subjects for His reign,

And soon confusion ceased to hold
Uninterrupted power,
And some of earth's oppressions old
Began to cringe and cower.

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There came a King to Bethlehem town,
  Two thousand years gone by,
And angels from the heavens spoke down
  A royal prophecy,

That while the red sun's central flame
  Should warm the peopled spheres,
Though every other kingly name
  Lay dead among dead years,

This King should hold His state above
  The weakness of decay,
Because the eternal power of love
  Should base His throne alway.

There came a King to Bethlehem town,
  Two thousand years gone by,
And still He reigns, and still speaks down
  The angels' prophecy,

And some fair century yet to rise
  His power complete shall grow,
And all earth's sceptered cruelties
  Before His throne lie low.

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EDER'S WATCH-TOWER

I LOVE the soft incoming tide
That breaks in showers of silver spray,
I love the dawn that opens wide
The floodgates of the living day,

I love the harvest voice that speaks
From each green blade of growing corn,
I love the first faint beam that breaks
Across the heart in sorrow's morn,

But fairer than the silver tide,
And brighter than the morning's flood
The light on Bethlehem's meadows wide
Where Eder's ancient watch-tower stood.

O little town of Bethlehem
Where Christ, the perfect man, was born,
What healing balm thou hast for them
Whose feet are tired and travel-worn,

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The Angels' song thy shepherds heard
  Makes music still among the years,
Thou driest with thy magic word
  The piteous fount of human tears;

O fairer than the silver tide
  And brighter than the morning's flood
The light across thy meadows wide,
  Where Eder's ancient watch-tower stood.

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THE ANGELS' SONG

WHEN ancient faiths the Orient held
Were crumbling to decay,
And blind mythologies of eld
In mournful ruin lay,
The hungry-hearted world was given
Truth unrevealed too long,
And from the glittering gates of heaven
Swept forth the angels' song.

When o'er the blossoming fields of thought
An autumn blight has come,
When every oracle we sought
In happier days is dumb,
Sometimes the spaces wide are riven
With strains delayed too long,
And from the glittering gates of heaven
Comes down the angels' song.

When life shrieks discords everywhere
And passion's dreadful cries

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Make mad disharmony in the air
  And rend the tranquil skies,
Sweet, silvery flute-notes God has striven
  To make us hear too long
Steal from the glittering gates of heaven,—
  The blessed angels' song.

O Christly choristers that first
  Sang down to Syrian men
Let your melodious music burst
  Upon the world again,
Come to our spirits helpless driven
  On turbulent tides too long,
Then shall we see the gates of heaven
  And hear the angels' song.

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O HAPPY CHRISTMAS DAYS OF OLD

O HAPPY Christmas days of old,
When chimes rang out across the snow
That lay its crust on wood and wold,
On hills above, on fields below.

O happy Christmas days of old,
When carols clear by children sung
Awoke the starlit evening cold
And through the silent hamlet rung.

O happy Christmas days of old,
When holly from the rafters fell,
And bells in moss-grown towers tolled
The midnight hymn men loved so well.

O happy Christmas days of old,
When every castle far and near
Its stern portcullis upward rolled
And welcomed all who came with cheer.

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O happy Christmas days of old,
  When poorest beggars ate their fill,
When for the time the meek grew bold,
  And everywhere was right good will.

O happy Christmas days of old,
  When yule clogs burned and flames leaped high,
And round the hearth good people told
  Tales of the Christ's nativity.

O happy, happy night of old,
  When, ere the world's first Christmas morn,
Kings of the East brought gifts of gold
  To lay before the newly-born.

O happy Christmas days of old,
  O night that gladdened all below,
Let your sweet spirit us enfold,
  Till perfect Christmas joys we know!

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I KNOW A VAST CATHEDRAL

I KNOW a vast Cathedral,
With sculptured walls and high,
And windows dight with every light
That decks the sunset sky;
And towers enwrapped with ivy,
And bells forever glad,
That peal and peal a future weal
To man, oppressed and sad.

I know a vast Cathedral,
Outside, a thing of grace,
But loveliness none can express
In its interior space;
It is the Christ's Religion,
And he that enters there
Finds truth long sealed at last revealed—
Aye, Heaven itself laid bare.

Its central tower is Christmas,
And thence melodious chimes

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Each year ring out the death of doubt,
  The strifes of ancient times;
Ring in with exultation
  The truth men fail to see,
That following right brings truest might,
  That love gives liberty.

Best faith of all the ages,
  Great temple, ivy-grown,
With windows dight with every light
  That decks the Eternal Throne,
Down from thy central tower,
  Let Heaven's sweet chimes to-day
Ring loud and fast, till men at last
  Keep well God's Christmas Day.

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THEY TELL US ONLY RUSTIC SHEPHERDS HEARD

"Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung."
—MILTON.

THEY tell us only rustic shepherds heard
The song of angel choirs, in Palestine,
That strange, momentous night of Jesus' birth,
The song that welcomed in the great new-born—
A few rude men, whose brows had never worn
The poorest honors people prize on earth
And grasp so greedily and think so fine;
To them alone was hymned God's gracious Word.

In every age that song is oftenest heard
By natural men, who shun ambition's strife,
Who would be happy wandering o'er the plain
With only trees and flowers and birds and sheep;
Who work for daily bread, and never weep
Save with real sorrow or for genuine pain.
To such, in western as in orient life,
God's angels love to hymn His gracious Word.

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CHRISTMAS PROPHECY

SILVERY-BEARDED, bent, and gray,
The Old Year passeth swift away,
Yet the ringers he keeps in his belfry tower
Peal no dirge for his waning power.

He is bidding them ring so joyously,
Can the Year of his end forgetful be?
"Ah, no," he says, "I am old and worn
But the young Christ-life to-day is born;

"I have led the world to its Christmas-tide,
I have opened the door of Heaven wide,
And bells of the ages hung on high
Are chiming out God's charity.

"O welcome, then, the Bethlehem Boy,
Sing at his cradle songs of joy,
Wreathe for his altars holly red,
For the shames of earth at last are dead."

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EPIPHANY

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WISE MEN FROM THE ORIENT CAME

WISE men from the Orient came
To the manger where Christ lay,
Knelt with gladness, not with shame,
By the baby's bed of hay.

Ermine robes and quilts of down
Are the right of infant kings,
Only one poor mantle brown
O'er her child sweet Mary flings;

Can so mean a cradle hide
What these Eastern Magi seek?
Ah, the heart forgets its pride
When the intellect is meek;

They have striven in many lands
To supply their famished souls,
Crossed, perhaps, Arabia's sands,
Wandered sadly toward the poles,

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But success their search has crowned
Not till, tired and travel-worn,
They have learned that Truth is found
Oftenest in a manger born.

So we wander blind and poor,
Hungry-hearted, sick with sin,
Till at last some humble door
Of God's mystery shuts us in;

Stables then like castles are,
Lowly men like princes born,
Glad are we when any star
Heralds any Christmas morn.

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SEPTUAGESIMA, SEXAGESIMA, QUINQUAGESIMA

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PREPARATION

WHO does not love the tranquil mystery
Of twilight, when the day is almost spent;
Who welcomes not the sacred Sundays three
That usher in the sober fast of Lent!

One calls to temperance and self-control
And bids us yield whatever clogs or maims,
That we may win in contests of the soul
As strong Greek youths won in the Olympian games;

One shows Truth's tender seeds, in soft embrace
Of fertile soil spring up to leaf and flower;
Or, unbedewed by love, unsunned by grace,
Fail in unfriendly earth for want of power.

One points to where, securely throned on high
Above moralities, howe'er divine,
Sits god-like Love, pure-minded Charity,
And makes us gladly worship at her shrine;

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All pave the way pressed long by Christian feet
From natural joy to that delightful shade
Where purple penitential flowers grow sweet,
And perfume all the air, and never fade.

O calm pre-Lenten days, your lessons deep
We would be taught; so God should give us mirth
For mourning, wake our souls from sluggish sleep,
And help us walk in heaven while yet on earth.

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LENT

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THE LENTEN-TIDE

WHAT have we done that we should seek
This Lenten-tide to be forgiven?
Our lips have never dared to speak
Reproach or calumny of Heaven!
Yet to the Lenten-tide belongs
Repentance for some secret wrongs.

What need have we for such distress?
Our hands have never robbed the poor,
We have not spurned in bitterness,
The trembling feet that sought our door;
And yet the Lenten-tide is meant
For men with spirits penitent.

What have we done? Our memories tell
Of scorn, impurity, and hate,
Of pride we have not sought to quell,

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Of duty's promptings bidden to wait—
Ah Heaven! that we should have such pride
To sorrow for at Lenten-tide.

What have we done? Our narrow thought
Has limited the Love divine,
And all the flood of truth has sought
In human channels to confine;
The Truth of God, so free and wide,
Condemns us at the Lenten-tide.

The web of life is spun apace,
And many threads are gay and bright,
But some to give the pattern grace
Must bear the impress of the night,
No weaver's hand may cast aside
The dark threads of the Lenten-tide.

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LENTEN HOPE

THROUGH all the world's dark Lenten days
Some Easter songs keep ringing,
No age so hopeless but its ways
Are cheered by distant singing,

No time so wintry but it keeps
Some seeds of bloom and brightness;
No chaff so worthless but there sleeps
Some good grain in its lightness,

No spirit in such hopeless gloom
That through the walls of feeling
God's sunlight to its darkest room
Comes not, swift moments, stealing.

These shadowy, purple days of Lent,
So steeped in present sorrow,
Have promise full, of soul-content
On Easter's glorious morrow;

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Have presage that mankind shall wake,
When earth's day-dream is ended,
In lands where cloud and stream and lake
In perfect grace are blended.

They keep a golden silence still,
'Tis true, that saints or sages
Shall never penetrate until
The sunset of the ages,

But through all sombre Lenten-tides
Such hopeful strains keep ringing,
Our hearts are sure that somewhere hides
A world of quenchless singing.

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THE INNER COURT

"TARRY ye here!" the Saviour said
And to the deeper shade withdrew
Of that dark spot near Kedron's bed
Where high, o'er-arching olives grew.

"Tarry ye here!" nor friend, nor foe
Must on this dreadful hour intrude,
My soul must face its bitterest woe
In silence and in solitude.

"Tarry ye here!" for I alone
Must enter dark Gethsemane,
No ear but God's must list my moan,
Though ye without may watch with me."

"Tarry ye here," each sufferer says,
"Pain's common portals open wide,
But sorrow has mysterious ways
Where even from you my soul must hide.

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"Wait till the purple shadows spun
About my grief's Gethsemane
Have thinned a little in the sun
That never long obscured can be;

"Stay till the spirit, dumb with pain,
Has spent its inarticulate cry,
And faith so parched has drunk the rain
Of God's compassion from the sky."

"Tarry ye here," the Saviour said,
And into deeper shade withdrew,
Then to the soul uncomforted
Heaven's chiefest white-winged angels flew.

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EASTER

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WHITE FESTIVAL OF EASTER

WHITE Festival of Easter,
Triumphant day of days,
The light of hope enkindling
Beside our lifeless ways,

'Tis right that regal lilies
About thy form should fling
The richest incense-odours
Mixed by the magic spring;

For thou hast all the beauty
Born of unsightly clay,
In nature's garden lavished
Since Time began her sway,

And thou hast all the glory,
In face and voice and mien,
Of every moral conquest
Man's struggling life has seen,

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And thou hast all the promise
  Of golden years to come,
When earth's imperfect prattle
  And clamorous cry are dumb,

When Truth's uncertain glimmer
  Clear light has come to be,
And strong, sweet tides of reason
  Have swept humanity.

White Festival of Easter,
  Thou sham'st the earth-born dream
That darkness is eternal
  And pain and loss supreme,

A better faith thou bearest,
  Belief from heaven that springs,
That death is only progress,
  And life the goal of things.

Thy tale of resurrection
  Is but the sacred seal
Affixed to nature's promise
  Of endless future weal,

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WHITE FESTIVAL OF EASTER

And we who oft despairing,
  Long Lenten days have wept,
With songs of satisfaction
  This lofty faith accept,

And bid thy strong, pure sceptre,
  Triumphant Queen of days,
White Festival of Easter,
  Rule all our wandering ways.

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O EASTER QUEEN

O EASTER, queen of all the days
That wear the Church's crown,
Upon our troubled human ways
Thy calm, fair face looks down,

Thou cam'st this morning thro' the fields
And spoke some magic word,
And all the plain that harvest yields
With pulsing life was stirred;

The hyacinth and tulip gay
About thy pathway pressed,
But golden-petaled lilies lay
In triumph on thy breast;

The messenger of death stooped low
To kiss thy conquering feet,
Life, trembling, seemed at last to know
Her victory complete.

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O EASTER QUEEN

Thou camest to the sleeping town
  To where the mourner lay,
And joy rose from her prison brown
  And rolled the stone away.

Thou hast the healing balm to mend
  The spirit hurt with fear,
It is thy gift new strength to lend
  To us who languish here.

O Easter, queen of all the days
  That wear the Church's crown,
Upon our troubled human ways
  Forevermore look down!

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EASTER FLOWERS

THEY speak deep truths, these lilies dumb,
Whose waxen forms our altars hide,
Fresh from Bermudian gardens come
To help us keep our Easter-tide.

They rouse our slumbering minds to think,
These timid, trembling crocus blooms,
In blue and lavender and pink,
From Nature's daintiest colour-looms.

The regal tulips flaunting fair
In gorgeous robes of red and gold,
Through parks and gardens everywhere,
What thoughts their broidered bosoms hold;

We read their minds and glimpses get
That fill us with mysterious joy,
Of worlds where perfect words are set
To melodies that never cloy,

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EASTER FLOWERS

Of marsh-lands welcoming every day
  Ecstatic tides that surge and sweep
From that divine, unfathomed bay,
  The source of soul-perfection, deep,

Of fields beyond the doors of death,
  O'er-arched by skies of lovelier blue
And rich with buds of sweeter breath
  Than Indian islands ever knew.

O shadowy lanes through which we pass,
  To mellow noon or purple night,
With springing step, or slow, alas!
  The days too quickly taking flight,

Let all your measuring mile-stones be
  Swathed in the flowers whose petals hide
Thoughts deep as God's eternity,
  Truths angels tell at Easter-tide.

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ALL THE SULLEN SORROW OF THE NATIONS

ALL the sullen sorrow of the nations,
All the heavy weight of earth's decay,
Cannot crush the faith that newly quickens
In the spirit, every Easter Day.

Never lay the pall of error darklier
On men's shackled souls than now it lies,
Through the vault of this late age are echoing
All the old despairing plaints and cries.

Knowledge twists and spins with subtle fingers
Threads of gold for our immortal gain,
In the complex looms of human progress
We still weave them into webs of pain.

Yet the world persistent keeps believing
Pain has not an end in painless clay,
And we hear its hearty creed-confessing
In the hopeful hymns it sings to-day.

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ALL THE SULLEN SORROW

Death is not, but only resurrection,
  Graves of all dead joys fly open wide,
Quivering souls burst free from final fetters—
  This man's vision at the Easter-tide.

Cling then, brothers, to the lofty promise
  Of a life superior to decay,
Uttered by the earth in Spring's awakening,
  Voiced by the glad rites of Easter Day;

Go in peace, God mocks not man's believing
  With mirage or fleeting phantasy,
Faith like ours is knowledge to our kindred
  In those worlds where fettered minds are free.

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EASTER-TIDE

HAIL, Ancient Easter-tide that drew
The nations to thy shrine,
Thou who wert born when man first knew
The thrall of Spring divine;

Thou hast the fragrance of all flowers
That fill hope's garden wide,
And clusters that enrich her bowers,
O blessed Easter-tide.

The mirrors of earth's banquet hall
Reflect thy glittering rays,
Thou art the fairest pearl in all
Her diadem of days.

The pattern of the time is cold,
The weavers weave in gloom,
Unseen, thou windest threads of gold
Into the busy loom.

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EASTER-TIDE

The dark-robed angel as he flies
  The shores of life beside,
Hearing thy god-like message cries
  "Victorious Easter-tide!"

O Easter, lift thy beacon higher
  Above us as we grope,
Thy lantern lighted at the fire
  Of the world's larger hope;

In answering love, to all who love
  The Church's hallowed ways,
Come with thy message from above
  For our despondent days.

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AT LAST WITH SOFT MAGNOLIA BLOOMS

AT last with soft magnolia blooms
The southern woods are fair,
And jasmines add their rich perfumes
To the delicious air.

At last the less luxuriant north
Wakes from its torpid spell,
And tender living things creep forth
Into the sunshine's swell.

Dark Lenten shades again dissolve
In glorious Easter light,
And faith awakes with high resolve
From penitential night.

All life is born, in these low spheres,
From other life's decay,
Some sombre night of tears or fears
Begets each golden day,

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AT LAST WITH SOFT MAGNOLIA BLOOMS

And though we walk with eyes too blind
To what such things declare,
Conviction deep sways every mind
That in some world more fair,

When death has worked its icy will
Upon the summer's cheer
And all the lust of life lies still
Upon its iron bier,

Soft Springs and Easter-tides shall break
With light supremely fair,
And every sleeping thing awake
In the delicious air.

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ASCENSION

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THE CONQUERING LIFE

THE gentle slopes of Olivet were green,
And oleanders censed the passers by,
And fronded palms lent grandeur to the scene
As the victorious Lord went up on high.

On rugged mountain tops where rocks were strown,
And o'er rough roads, his feet had often strayed,
Last, in Gethsemane's deep shades, alone,
The stricken, sorrowing Christ had knelt and prayed;

Now death itself was past, and he, a king,
Midst angel guards assumed his primal power;
O sleeping sons of men, awake and sing,
This is not his but your triumphal hour!

He broke from Joseph's tomb that ye might break
From all the graves that bar your souls from day,
He drank anew life's cup that ye might take
Unstinted draughts of Heaven along the way;

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He rose to higher worlds that ye might rise
From earth-born doubts and tombs of low desire,
'Twas your redemption song that filled the skies
When he was met by all the angel choir.

O Risen Christ, we never trod with thee
Judean fields, where scarlet lilies flower,
Nor with the silent group near Bethany
Stood wondering, at thy great ascension hour,

Yet in thy conquering life we have a share,
Thy pity and thy peace to us belong;
The crowns thou wearest we thy followers wear,
The sceptred strength thou wieldest makes us strong.

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WHITSUN-TIDE

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O SPIRIT FROM THE ETERNAL DEEP

O SPIRIT from the Eternal Deep,
Who camest once with wind and fire
To wake the world from sensual sleep,
And rouse the Church to strong desire,

Thy subtle influence sways the race
To virile thought and virtuous deed,
Thou hast no narrow resting-place
In commonwealth, or church, or creed;

Through many a crowd since Pentecost
Thy influence unperceived has crept,
On souls the church accounted lost
Thy clear, ecstatic flame has leapt.

Thou art the rich, luxuriant mould
Wherein our best deeds germinate,
Thine was the power of sculptors old
Their shapeliest statues to create,

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By thee the vast cathedrals rose,
And heavenly music came to birth,
Thy rich perfection overflows
In all the beauty of the earth.

Thy voice is heard in every sigh
Of the soft-swaying forest trees,
Thine is the unjarring melody
That greets us in the summer breeze,

We hear thy heart-beats in the shade
And silence of the forest dim,
Thou art in all the flowers that braid
With blue and gold the river's brim;

The firmament thy mind reveals,
The unchanging orbs, the spaces wide,
The splendid crimson fire that steals
Into the west at eventide.

'Tis thou that from the eternal deep,
With noiseless call, with wind and fire,
When we are sunk in sensual sleep
Awakenest us to strong desire,

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O SPIRIT OF THE ETERNAL DEEP

And on the hearth where once of old
  Love burned, then flickered, then was lost,
Reviv'st amidst the ashes cold
  The inspiring flame of Pentecost.

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TRINITY

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GOD'S MANIFOLDNESS

O DOCTRINE deep, of the ages, O creed of the inmost soul,
Confessed wherever man craves for light, from Tropic sun to pole,
Thou wert not wrought in the workshop of cold scholastic brain,
Nor brought to birth like lesser creeds in intellectual pain,
Thou wert born when the wings of the Spirit brooded the soundless sea
And quickened the atoms primal to wondrous potency,
Thou wert forged when the worlds chaotic, inclosed in the fiery sun,
Were thrown from the central system and order was begun,
Thou wert shaped when God in his power said light at last should be;

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Then shed thy light on our darkness, O Truth of Trinity.

We peer through the cruel spaces with orphaned worlds alive,
We look at the sentient kingdoms, where none but the strong survive,
And the faith we are bidden to cherish seems only a mocking light,
And we feel like timid children left alone in the night,
But thou art a voice to tell us a father's love is shown
In every act creative since Chaos was o'erthrown,
Thou sayest that high in heaven sits not a loveless God,
But one who comes with yearning to kiss the meanest clod;
Then we pray that our hearts forever held close to his heart shall be,
And cling to the creed that saves us, the Truth of Trinity.

We are tired of earth's oppressions, we are sick of its greed of gold,

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The wrongs that are waged in the darkness, the crimes that the days unfold,
We look for the signs of sonhood in the race divinely made,
But the signs grow faint and fainter, and at last we feel afraid
That man is an engine only, set like a watch for a day,
A deft work done in the light of the sun, a sculptured form of clay,—
Till we turn to the First-begotten and find that he came to tell
That man, who is God's creation, is God's own child as well;
Then we pray that the mind of the Father in his sons fulfilled may be,
And rest with hope firm-founded on the Truth of Trinity.

The life in the woods in spring-time, when the sap runs free and warm,
The might of the oak, or cedar, that breasts the winter storm,
The joy that swells and burgeons in the fertile breast of the earth

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As it brings the crocus and tulip and blushing rose
to birth,
Are all from the same full fountain where the faith
of man is fed,
Where feeble souls are strengthened and sad souls
comforted,—
'Tis the life of a Personal Power that moves in
all that is seen,
That makes the blind earth blossom, and keeps
man's courage green;
O God of the worlds, unmeasured our longing is
for thee,
To loftier heights uplift us through thine own
Trinity!

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MY PUREST LONGINGS SPRING

MY purest longings spring
From the divine,
The sweetest songs I sing
They are not mine,

I chisel the rude stone
With feverish hand,
The statue comes alone
At God's command.

Beyond earth's tainted air
I sometimes fly
On wings of faith and prayer;
Yet 'tis not I.

Not I but He enlights
My flickering creeds,

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Not I but He unites
My shattered deeds;

Not I but God, for He,
My larger life,
Fulfils Himself in me
With ceaseless strife.

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O LOVE DIVINE

O LOVE Divine, that circlest all
Our little seas of strife,
So might I feel thy tender thrall
Upon my wayward life,

The restless tides of ocean creep
Into the sheltered bays,
Thy tides through all my being sweep
And fill its water-ways.

O Love Divine, pure sea of light
About a sea of sin,
Thy blessed radiance to-night
Folds all my darkness in,

And soothes to peace the unquiet shore
Where angry waves have lain,
And spreads a silver mantle o'er
The unsightly rocks of pain,

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And stills the moaning of the storm
I thought could not be stayed,
And shames the doubt whose shadowy form
Kept mocking as I prayed.

O Love Divine, that circlest all
Our little seas of strife,
Forever in thy rapturous thrall
Enfold my wayward life!

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SINAI AND THE PLAIN

WHEN Moses left the sacred mount,
Enraptured with the voice of God,
His peace was like a living fount
That bursts from the incrusting sod,

The dazzling radiance round his brow
Bore witness to the Spirit's fire,
Nor did his ecstasy allow
Of worldly thought or weak desire.

He saw the tents of Israel
Thick on the plain at Sinai's base,
Like white-winged, nestling doves, that dwell
In shelter of some holy place,

And as the winding path he trod,
From barren crag to verdant slope,
He felt himself the priest of God,
The inspired minister of hope.

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Here Heaven tunes, it is her way,
The heart to holiest harmonies
And then lets earth's rude fingers play
Discordant strains upon the keys,—

A glittering idol god, upreared
Against Jehovah's sovereign law,
A god by sensual Pharoahs feared,
With angry eyes the prophet saw;

He dashed the hallowed stones away
God's hand had graven on Sinai's height,
And while their fragments round him lay
He passed into the gloom of night.

O Spirit, calm, of truth and power,
Give us thy courage on our way,
In every weak, despondent hour
Visit our trembling faith and say:

"Not thus forever shall the soul
From radiant peaks of faith be hurled,
Truth's steady tide shall sometime roll
Into the worship of the world,

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"And men shall scorn idolatries,
And reverent wait at Sinai's base
Till he appears whose favoured eyes
Have seen Jehovah face to face."

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RESIGNATION

I ASK no more that I may know
The way God has for me,
I only care that He shall show
My duty momently,

At first I sought with restless mind
To know the entire way,
But now I am content to find
My path from day to day.

I am not idle, for it seems
That much on me depends,
But failing all my fondest dreams
I take what Heaven sends;

Not always gladly, but resigned,
I wait the Father's will,
Believing that though I am blind
He walks beside me still.

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IMMORTALITY

THERE are strange moments when the human dies
In us, and the divine our spirits bear
Rises supreme, and awful silence lies
Upon our seas, and lightest thought is prayer.

We question immortality on lower planes
And grope for arguments to end the strife;
We *are* immortal when the spirit reigns
And then are conscious of undying life.

Of immortality, till thou canst call
Thy soul, in reverence, such names as God
Is wont to bear, speak not; till thou canst fall
Before thyself, then rising from the sod
Of thine own humanness, in worlds above
Declare with him, "I am!" and "I am love!"

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HE UNDERSTANDS

WHEN we have come with all our faults and fears
Into the presence chamber of the King
I do not think we shall recount the years
That now seem scarred so deep with suffering;

I do not think that He will give us time
To scourge our souls because we were so vile,
But only look at us and make us climb
Into high heaven upon his loving smile.

When all life's passion clouds have burned away
And we have looked at last upon the Sun
I think we shall not bow our heads and stay
Mourning the victories we might have won,

But be caught up so quick above our fears
That we shall lose the words we meant to say
About our fierce temptations, and the tears
Of weak regret we shed along our way,

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HE UNDERSTANDS

And rest like little children at the side
Of Him who leads us up to those high lands,
Lost in his life, forever satisfied,
Since He misjudges not, but understands.

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THY PRIEST

WHEN at early morn I stand
Humble at the Altar Feast,
Breaking bread at thy command,
Then I know I am thy Priest.

When thou showest I have turned
Some blind spirit towards the east
Who for sunlight long has yearned,
Then I know I am thy Priest.

When thou let'st me soothe a pain
Others, probing, have increased,
Then 'tis clear that not in vain
I have been ordained thy Priest.

Make me anxious, Lord, to be
Helpful to the very least
Child of weak humanity,
This will prove I am thy Priest.

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THY PRIEST

To some altar every day
  Where the flame of hope has ceased
Point, O Christ, my feet the way,
  Gladly there will go thy Priest.

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PRAY FOR THE DEAD

PRAY for the dead, who bids thee not,
Is human kinship, then, so frail
That those we love can be forgot
When they have passed within the veil?

Has God released the old, sweet ties
He took such loving pains to weld,
And said: "Henceforth their memories
In prayerless silence must be held?"

Have they no triumphs yet to win,
No toilsome heights of truth to climb,
Does no strange syllable of sin
Mar the soft cadence of their rhyme?

Pray for the dead, the links that bound
Thy soul to theirs were forged on high,
Borne upward they have surely found
The chain firm fastened in the sky;

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PRAY FOR THE DEAD

And they have found that there as here
  Thou gavest them strength the roads to run
That end in gateways opening clear
  On friendlier fields beyond the sun,

And they have watched thy winding ways
  And helped thee many a load to bear,
And in thy dark, despondent days
  Have stretched for thee strong hands of prayer.

Pray for the dead nor cease thy prayer,
  Though holier they not yet are free
To climb to those great uplands fair
  Where only perfect souls may be.

Pray for the dead, it is thy right
  To leap in faith the shadowy bars
That shut thee still to orbs of night,
  And keep them safe in golden stars.

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SOMETIME

SOMETIME, sometime,
The clouds of ignorance shall part asunder,
And we shall see the fair, blue sky of truth
Spangled with stars, and look with joy and wonder
Up to the happy dream-lands of our youth,
And thither climb.

Sometime, sometime,
The passion of the heart we keep dissembling
Shall free herself, and rise on silver wing,
And all ungathered chords of music, trembling
Deep in the soul, our lips shall learn to sing,
A strain sublime.

Sometime, sometime,
Love's broken links shall all be reunited,
But not upon the ashy forge of pain;
The full-blown roses dead, the sweet buds blighted
Shall bloom beside life's garden walks again,
In fairer clime.

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SOMETIME

Sometime, sometime,
The prophet's unsealed lips shall straight deliver
The message of eternal life uncursed;
Wind-swept, the poet's heaven-tuned soul shall quiver,
And from his trembling lyre at length shall burst
Immortal rhyme.

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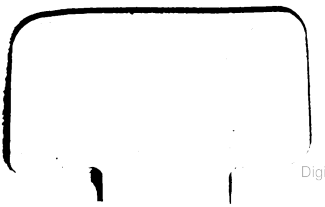

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